



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the **Armed Forces Community Covenant Signatories Panel**

Committee Room 1 - Civic Centre, Swansea

Monday, 28 January 2019 at 2.00 pm

Present: J E Burtonshaw (Chair) Presided

Representing Organisations

Alex Baharie	Swansea Council for Voluntary Services
Ruth Fleming	Royal Navy Reserves
Katherine Jennings	Veterans Club
Nick Lockley	Ospreys Rugby
Natalie McCombe	The Poppy Factory
Kathryn Morgans	Veterans Club
Sandy Shaw	Veterans Club
Paul Osborne	UWTSD
Sarah Mallaghan	DWP
Adrian Rabey	British Training Board
Jason Suller	Blesma
Clive Thomas	Probation

Officer(s)

Gareth Borsden	Democratic Services Officer
Grace Halfpenny	Regional Armed Forces Covenant Liaison Officer
David Price-Deer	Special Events Manager

Apologies for Absence

Capt. Chris Evans, Byron Lewis and David Singletary

42 Disclosures of Personal & Prejudicial Interests from Members.

None.

43 Minutes.

The minutes of the Panel held on 26 November 2018 were agreed as a correct record.

44 Project 360, Service for Older Veterans.

Helen Shaw - Age Cymru, had indicated that she was unable to attend the meeting due to a bereavement.

Item deferred to the March meeting.

45 Bulldogs Boxing Club & Centre.

Mal Emerson was not present at the meeting.

Item deferred to the March meeting.

46 Update from Panel Members.

Panel Members provided verbal updates relating to the current and proposed activities, events and workloads of their respective groups and organisations.

Regional Armed Forces Covenant Liaison Officer

Grace Halfpenny referred to a new grants scheme relating to grants for building usage and maintenance. Details were sent out previously to Members, but Grace would resend details after this meeting.

She referred to the details of a scheme to support D Day veterans visiting France that she had recently circulated. Details of a stakeholder/charity/3rd sector event that is planned in Cardiff were outlined, as well as funding initiative relating to hearing loss for veterans born before 1950, along with a recently circulated Welsh Government information leaflet. The information will be resent to Panel Members.

She also referred to a recent jobs fair in Bridgend where recent Welsh Government publications; a toolkit for employers and a pathway for job seekers, had been well received.

Adrian Rabey of the British Training Board advised that they had been involved in the design of these employment support aids.

Grace stated she will forward these to Members and suggested that they are referred to in employment events in the Swansea area.

Members queried the current content of the Covenant pages on the Council's web site. Grace explained that she has had discussions with Spencer Martin about updating the pages, but also to get a more consistent approach to information across the 3 local authority areas.

Grace reported that she had been in discussions with management of the ABMU Health Board regarding reinstatement of their Armed Forces Covenant Forum. This Forum would focus on purely on health issues, but there would obviously be cross references between the Health Board and the Local Authority based Forums in Swansea and Neath Port Talbot. She indicated she would attend meetings to relay any issues identified by this panel which impact upon health and wellbeing to seek greater collaboration. It would also be appropriate for a representative of the Health Board to attend Local Authority meetings to likewise see support for health and wellbeing priorities identified by the Health Board. She suggested that future agendas should contain an item for the ABMU representative to report to this Panel.

Probation

Clive Thomas referred to a scheme he had been recently made aware of relating to hearing difficulties for Northern Ireland veterans. He would try and get further details and circulate to the group.

He indicated that Probation are amending the way their organisation works again in the coming months and he and his colleagues will continue to try to identify any veterans they come into contact with and signpost them to any relevant services and organisations.

The Poppy Factory

Natalie McCombe also referred to the "Inform Swansea" web pages and the link with the Change Step information online.

She referred to the "Swansea Working" initiative and indicated that it is also a useful online facility for promoting Armed Forces issues.

She outlined her organisation has a caseload of 35 clients, 21 of whom are active and 14 in work, 50% of these were also Veterans NHS Wales patients.

Swansea Council for Voluntary Services

Alex Baharie referred to the online search facility called "Infoengine" which detailed a wide range of services available from the voluntary sector, details of which she would circulate after the meeting.

Veterans Club

Sandy Shaw indicated that the organisation had now expanded further and now holds meeting in the Glynneath and Penlan areas, and will be expanding into the Cardiff area shortly. He referred to the link established with South Wales Police relating to training.

He also referred to upcoming events at the Lord Mayors Parlour-Guildhall, the Mansion House and the Wig & Pen.

Blesma

Jason Suller report that the organisation continues to work across Wales, including the new digital programme which aims to get veterans "online".

He outlined the success of the "Generation X" scheme that is being expanded into Wales. The scheme involves amputees going into schools and discussing their circumstances with young people.

He outlined the success of two of his clients involvement with the Ospreys wheelchair rugby team.

British Training Board

Adrian Rabey referred to the Employment Toolkit his company have been heavily involved in developing and indicated that Welsh Government now seem to be taken on board the idea for veterans.

He indicated that from the funding awarded from the Covenant last year, the first round of training courses are underway, of the 10 on the course – 3 have placements already and 5 have secured interviews.

He detailed the organisations links with the London/South Bank University for veterans to progress their qualifications into a Master degree. He also referred to the links being developed with UWTSD.

He indicated the organisation would aim to apply for funding under the new covenant awards scheme relating to buildings.

UWTSD

Paul Osborne reported that the University was now extremely close to signing up to the Covenant.

He outlined that their website had now been updated to show all the courses available.

Ospreys

Nick Lockley referred to the recent Armed Forces event at the Stade Francais game which had 196 attendees from various organisations in attendance, as well as various displays and recruitment stands. The event would be repeated again at a match next season.

He referred to the free entry for games for veterans with Armed Forces Cards, and indicated he would further research the availability to serving personnel.

He referred to the excellent links the Ospreys had with schools which could potentially be utilised for the Generation X project.

Navy

Ruth Fleming outlined the Government initiative relating to service personnel cards. She indicated she understood that veteran's cards would now be cut as opposed to being removed from people when they left the forces.

Chair

June Burtonshaw indicated she continued to work with various organisations on housing issues.

She outlined the possible expansion of the yearly event held at a Swans home game for Veterans.

She referred to the "Borrowbox" initiative at Swansea libraries, which makes audio books available for free.

She sought the views of the panel on the frequency of meetings, the Panel were happy to meet on a quarterly basis going forward.

She indicated she would meet with relevant officers to discuss and plan agenda items for future panel meetings.

The meeting ended at 2.53 pm

Chair